

Eric Roper, *Star Tribune*

Is a political war brewing between Rep. Betty McCollum and her counterpart to the northwest, Michele Bachmann?

It may be one sided so far, but something's heating up.

After calling out "anti-government extremists" last week in a thinly veiled gibe at Bachmann and the Tea Party, McCollum decided today to go for the jugular in a rare attack on a fellow member of the Minnesota delegation.

Press release: "Rep. Bachmann Rejects Civility, Smears President Obama by Labeling Administration "Gangster Government"

That's referring to a comment Bachmann made yesterday at the Tea Party rallies here in Washington, which has already attracted the attention of former president Bill Clinton. "We're on to them; we're on to this gangster government," Bachmann told the crowd.

Incidentally, Bachmann made this accusation on the House floor several months ago and at at least one rally in Minnesota (i.e. it's nothing new).

In the statement, McCollum again tied the rhetoric to the Oklahoma City bombing, which occurred 15 years ago next Monday.

"With hate groups and violent anti-government militias on the rise in this country elected leaders must be mindful of the potential of their words to inspire violence. Constructive, passionate political debate is expected in our democracy, but harsh, dangerous name-calling that vilifies the President or Members of Congress is irresponsible," McCollum said.

"We must not ignore that the Oklahoma City bombing was an act of political violence perpetrated by deranged, anti-government extremists. It's much too late after a bomb goes off to start condemning hate-inspired, violent rhetoric."

Bachmann responded to criticism from Democrats on ABC World News tonight in a segment about Clinton's comments.

"They have been maligning people who oppose their policies, inferring that people may be racist or inferring that they may be violent," Bachmann said.